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ABSTRACT

Business today is wasting a great deal of money on an ineffectual process: management training. Numerous problems arise when first line supervisors or middle level managers receive "education" in management skills that is not in line with the organization as a whole. "Failures" occur when managers are "educated" to do something they know perfectly well how to do but choose not to do. Contributing factors to the failure of managers may include inconsistency in the organizational system, lack of corporate philosophy or goals, and poor communication lines and "demotivators." The solution to these problems begins with an organizational philosophy. A simply stated and well-communicated philosophy can put all the members of a corporation on the same path and eliminate much of the frustration. It is the responsibility of management development trainers, in conjunction with top management, to serve as interpreters of the philosophy as it becomes goals and objectives for managers. After the management activities are clarified, the next step is for managers, in conjunction with the management development trainer, to determine if the individual managers have the knowledge and ability to implement the requisite goals and objectives. If a manager is not meeting expectations, management development trainers can assist in determining if that person would best benefit by monitoring, training, two-way communication, positive consequences, or the removal of obstacles, and can then assist in the process.

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MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT: WHY IT FAILS

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Management Development: Why It Fails*
Pat Heim, Ph.D.

"Hi, Pat, this is Don Director. I'm having some problems with one of my managers. I've been getting complaints from his employees about how he's been treating them. I'd like you to see if you can fix-up the situation -- maybe put him in one of those management workshops or something."

I've received this phone call dozens of times from dozens of people who are managers of managers. And I feel the same frustration each time because I know I can't do what they expect and they don't understand why I can't.

The purpose of this paper is to explain the process of management development. Specifically, what are the prerequisites for an effective management development system? What must the CEO/President contribute? What parts of the process are the manager of the manager and the management development professional responsible for? What can management development realistically be expected to accomplish and what types of support are necessary for these accomplishments to be realized? Finally, why is it that management development can't "fix up" Don's manager and, more over, why would training the manager turn out to be wasteful and frustrating for everyone involved?

*The author would like to sincerely thank Serge Lashutka of Organizational Research and Development, Kaiser-Permanente for his insight and comments from the inception of this paper to its final version.

Business today is wasting a great deal of money on an ineffectual process: management training. More and more corporations are creating departments or hiring outside consultants to train their managers how to do their management work better. Underlying this process is the assumption that people are promoted into management because of their technical competence but oftentimes do not have the skills or ability to do their management work. This assumption is probably valid in many instances as certain management skills can be taught. But this does not insure management success. Managers "fail" for a myriad of reasons, many of which have nothing to do with lack of education or ability. Other contributors to failure may be: inconsistency in the organizational system, lack of corporate philosophy or goals, poor communication lines and demotivators, to name a few. Unfortunately such vague conceptual terms are of no help to the manager with difficulties or to the organization with poorly functioning managers.

This paper will develop a method to analyze management problems. With accurate analysis, appropriate solutions, which may or may not be education, can be chosen. Education or "training" is not the only answer.

How We Got Here

Back in the first part of this century managers were expected to know how to get the job done and do it. If a manager failed, then the obvious solution was termination. The scientific management research done by people such as Taylor reflected this

sink or swim approach. Output was measured and job security depended on meeting one's established performance standards.

Today in business a different tone clearly dominates. If a person is promoted into management and begins to have difficulties producing or meeting objectives the corporation does not react with termination. The roots of this change may be seen historically. The now famous Hawthorne studies done at the Western Electric in Hawthorne, Illinois dramatically changed the perspective of management. Scientific management, with its emphasis on the "division of labor" and "time-motion studies", could not help managers account for the effects of group dynamics and norms. At Hawthorne, productivity increased as factory lighting was reduced to the level of a full moon. A feeling of importance increased productivity.

Gradually a general acceptance has taken hold which supports the idea that the "feeling" of individuals may have a significant impact on productivity. If your employees "feel" good about their jobs, the company, and management then ultimately that "feeling" will impact the bottom line. And if you don't develop a positive attitude among employees toward work, ultimately it will effect the bottom line. This "humanistic" approach to management begat management training programs with titles such as "interpersonal communication skills". The assumption being that people were promoted into management with technical abilities but these same people usually lacked a commensurate interpersonal ability. The solution was clear: put them in a classroom and

teach them how to relate well with their employees. But can such skills be taught? The answer to this question became confounded with government intervention in the area of equal opportunity and employee rights.

At one time a manager could fire an employee whether the reason was well-grounded or a whim. Today companies have had to pay millions of dollars in lawsuits, dealing with terminations, promotions, and harrassment. This has served to reinforce the belief that employee's feelings about the company, their management and their jobs were important and could effect the bottom line, albeit in a different manner. Again the solution was: teach those managers human relations skills, to avoid lawsuits.

But numerous problems arise when first line supervisors or middle level managers receive "education" in management skills that is not in line with the organization as a whole. "Failures" occur when managers are "educated" to do something they know perfectly well how to do but choose not to do. The following examples may sound familiar.

Scenario I: Abby, a manager, attended a course on how to develop and motivate employees through career planning. She went back to her department and worked with each employee on long-term career goals, career paths, necessary skills to achieve each position, etc. What Abby is now finding out is that promotion in her company is based on who you know. This is even more pronounced at the higher levels. Result: frustration for her and her employees.

Scenario II: Bob, a manager, attended a workshop which clearly showed him the advantages of a participative management style. He has begun using this approach and his employees are taking much more pride and interest in their work. Some of the decisions are even better than he would have come up with on his own. Today Bob was passed over for a promotion. Upper management feels he has become "indecisive"; they chose someone who could "shoot from the hip". Result: Bob feels double-crossed by the company.

Scenario III: The personnel office had been receiving numerous complaints from Charlie's employees, especially women and minorities, about bias in job assignments, hours and raises. At the suggestion of the Personnel Department Charlie was sent to a week long "Employee Relations Program". He came back tan and relaxed but the complaints have not ceased. Result: Upper management is perplexed.

The failures cited here are common in organizations and yet millions of dollars each year continue to be poured into such training programs. While the three problems are resolvable, training alone is not the answer. The solution to these problems begins with an organizational philosophy. Management development works with top management on the diffusion and integration of the company philosophy throughout all levels of management. From this perspective the role of management development is a process orientation rather than a content orientation. In addition management development works in conjunction with mid and top

management to analyze existing management problems. This requires that the person in this position must be able to pinpoint weakness in managers' abilities and knowledge. And in addition, management development must be able to determine why a specific manager does not attain the goals and objectives and work with the employee's manager to resolve the problem.

Where to Start

Management is a frustrating job. A great deal of this frustration comes from functioning in what appears to be an inconsistent environment. A simply stated and well communicated philosophy or mission statement can put all the members of a corporation on the same path and eliminate a good deal of the frustration.

For instance Hewlett-Packard has a clear philosophy statement. While not all H. P. employees could reiterate each of the points in that statement you are very likely to hear most employees refer to the "H. P. Way".

Any effective management development program must begin at this level with a clear delineation by top management of the company's philosophy and goals. Examples of these might be: leadership in state of the art technology, leadership in quality, increased productivity, equal opportunity, growth through long term investments, development of employees from within. Recently T. Mitchell Ford, Chairman and President of Emhart Corporation spoke at a management development seminar in his company and

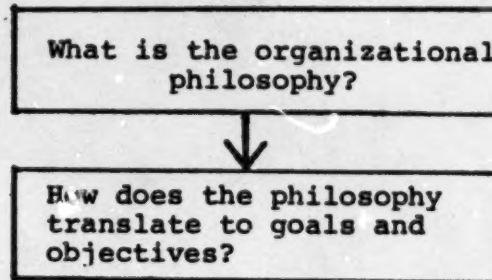
described his perception of Emhart; "First of all, I hope people - our own and the public - see us as a quality company. . . Quality to me means . . ." Ford went on to define quality as it effects employees, public opinion, products, pricing, backing, return on investment, employee opportunities, risks, assets and resources. Such a statement by a CEO clarifies for managers the philosophical grounding for their management decisions. This allows managers to make better and more successful decisions.

It is inappropriate and futile for management development to determine or guess at the company philosophy, because top management must not only agree on this but support it in words and actions. This support comes in the form of appropriate rewards and punishments for reaching or failing to reach these goals. For example in scenario I, if top management stated as a goal "internal development of employees" then that goal needs to be reiterated by rewarding Abby for her career development efforts. To either ignore her efforts or negatively reinforce them causes a mixed message that sends reverberations of frustration through the organization. Management becomes a lose-lose proposition.

The Organizational Interpreter

While the CEO may be able to state the philosophy of the organization someone needs to translate this into goals as the messages filter down the organization. It is the responsibility of management development in conjunction top management to serve as interpreter of the philosophy as it becomes goals and objectives for managers (figure 1). Management development begins the

process by clarifying with top management the corporate philosophy and/or mission. The second step in the process is to clarify what goals and objectives top management sees as consistent with the philosophy and mission.

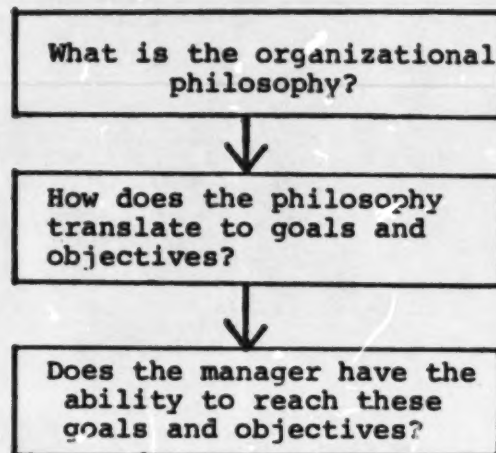


For instance, how does "Top quality at the lowest possible cost" translate into activities by top, middle, and first-line management? Does this mean paying higher salaries to get the best employees? Would this include sending a top employee to a six-week executive program? Does this mean that a manager's bottom line can suffer today so as to make long term capital investments? Management development is the translator between corporate philosophy and management goals. This provides a crucial step and prevents the common problem of "we'll try it and hope its what they wanted". Management is much more clear in what is expected of them and top management is much more likely to get what it wanted.

Managing By Philosophy ... And Objectives

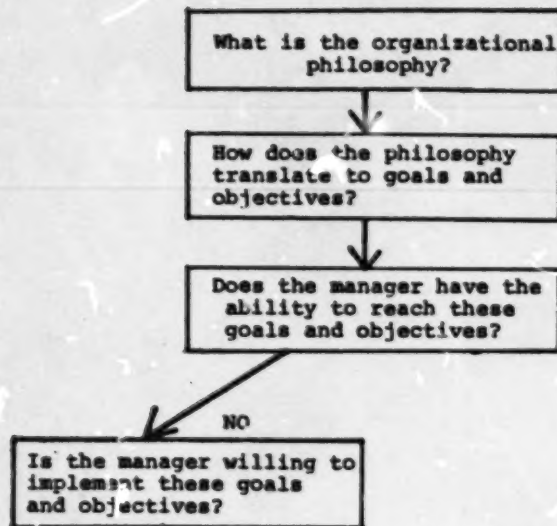
After the management activities are clarified, the next step in this analysis process is for managers in conjunction with management development to determine if the individual managers

have the knowledge and ability to implement the requisite goals and objectives.



In scenario II Bob had been striving for some time to motivate employees. He simply had no idea where to begin. The workshop he attended gave him the knowledge necessary. In this case he did not initially have the ability and knowledge to implement the desired management behavior. But what Bob did not know is that participative management was NOT what top management had identified as an appropriate management style in reaching the goals and objectives. Unfortunately for Bob top management probably wasn't consciously aware of their expectations. Management development should have been responsible for validating with top management an appropriate style based on the corporate philosophy. Had this been done, Bob may have received his promotion.

After management development assesses the managers' ability to implement the goals and objectives, additional questions must be asked.

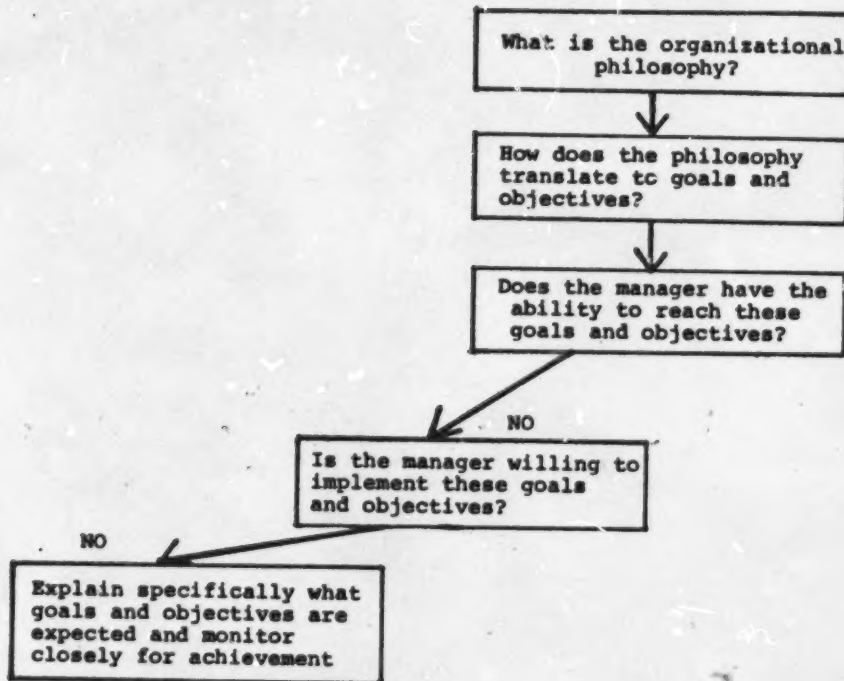


This approach was developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1977) to assess the task-related maturity level of an employee. Maturity level is defined by Hersey and Blanchard "As the capacity to set high but attainable goals (achievement-motivation), willingness and ability to take responsibility, and education and/or experience of an individual or a group" (1977, p. 161). The lowest maturity level is held by a manager who is neither willing or able to do the task required.

Make Me.

Charlie may fall into this category. It is possible that he has no idea how to manage in an unbiased manner nor, given his great tan and unchanged behavior, is he willing to change his management style. With a manager who is unwilling and unable to do the job the approach is to explain specifically what goals and

objectives are wanted and then watch closely to see that these are achieved. This requires that the goals and

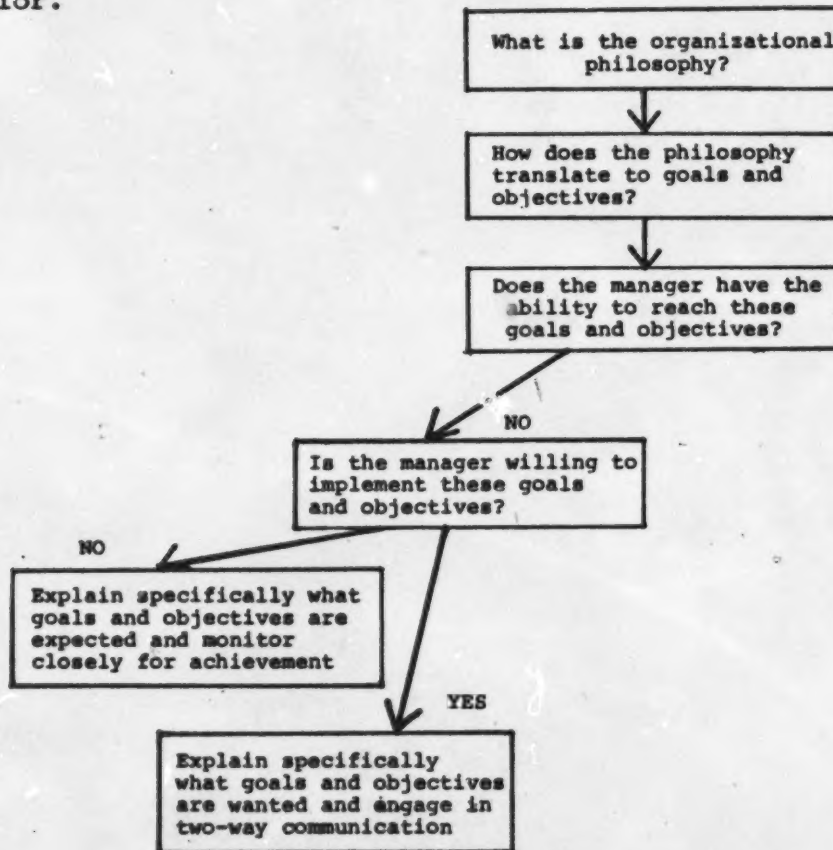


objectives have been defined. The communication of these expectations should take place between the manager and his or her boss.

While the Personnel Department and management in scenario III attempted to have the bias problem explained through the workshop setting they failed in their attempt to change Charlie because this behavior was not closely monitored upon his return. The management above him should have 1) clarified that he had learned the appropriate behavior and 2) rewarded positive changes in his behavior and/or negatively sanctioned unchanged behavior. Because this was not done the training workshop was useless, and Charlie is even more comfortable with his management style.

I'd Like to But ...

Now let us assume that Charlie, while previously unable to manage in an unbiased manner, was very willing to learn how to change. He went to the workshop and came back eager to implement the change but unsure how, when and in what way to change his behavior.



As Hersey and Blanchard suggest, the best approach to use with a person who is willing but unable to perform is to monitor their behavior closely and engage in two-way communication. Charlie's management needs to clearly explain the goals and objectives expected and needs to elicit his opinion about the best way to handle the situation. If Charlie tries a new approach with his

employees and it back-fires he needs to be able to consult those above him as to what went wrong and what he might do in the future to be successful. If he doesn't know what is expected and/or he has no one to consult on problems in reaching expectations he will fail and again the best training workshop will have been useless.

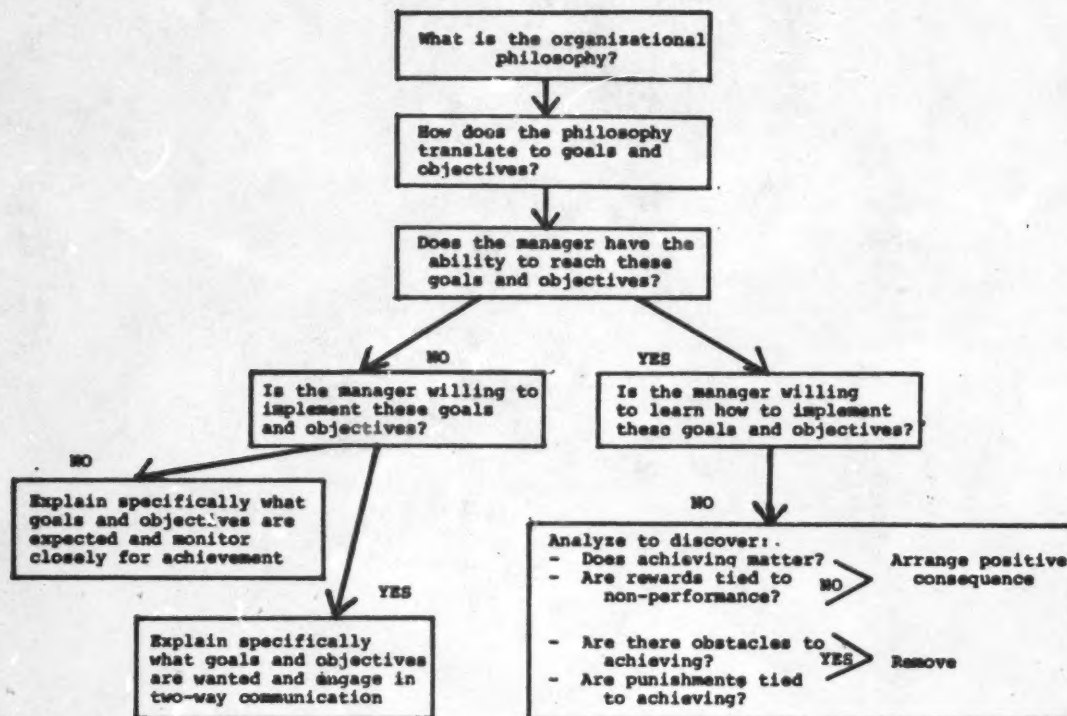
When They Already Know

Probably one of the most frustrating and confounding situations for managers of managers is to have someone working for them who knows how to manage very well but just doesn't do it. Let's imagine that a supervisor, Della Gate, works for you. You have noticed that she sits in her office working with the door closed most of the day. Her employees feel alienated and confused about what they are supposed to be doing. From repeated discussions with her you have learned that she knows that to manage well she must interact with her employees. So why doesn't she do what she knows she's supposed to?

In this case a management training workshop is NOT the answer. Della is very adept at interpersonal skills she just chooses not to manage in the style required. After clarifying that Della has the ability to implement these behaviors and outcomes the next question should be "is she willing?"

Why Should I?

If the answer is no, as is apparently the case with Della, Mager's (1970) approach to analyzing performance problems may clarify the situation.



Does Achieving Matter?

First, one must ask the question: Does achieving matter? Della isn't blind. She sees some of her fellow managers knocking themselves out to spend time with their employees. These people are treated no differently in terms of rewards or punishments than she is and she doesn't have to "waste" all that time.

Are Rewards Tied To Non-Performance?

If achieving does matter then the next question should be: Are rewards tied to non-performance? Returning to Charlie who had the employee bias problem, let's look at rewards he might get from not performing his job in the desired way. He rationalizes that if he were to change his style of managing it would cost him a tremendous amount of effort. He would have to spend more time

recruiting to find qualified women and minorities, more time training these employees, more time assuring a fair distribution of work. Its easier and rewarding to just continue to manage as he has been.

The solution to the above situations is to arrange a positive consequence for managing in the desired manner. When Della Gate sees that her colleagues are rewarded for spending more time directly interacting with employees, she too will be motivated to try. When Charlie is rewarded for the extra effort in recruiting, training and assigning work then these behaviors will continue. But positive consequences are not the only appropriate response to an employee who knows how to manage well but chooses not to do so.

Are There Obstacles?

Often the organizational system will prove to be an obstacle in managers reaching goals. Mary Manager has been told from above that she should establish an MBO form of management in her department. She understands how this works but has some reservations because it seems her objectives are always being changed. Undaunted, Mary works out a series of objectives for herself and her employees. After clearly detailing all goals and objectives and having the system in place for three weeks, Mary's boss, wants to see her. Just as she thought, because of changes her boss didn't expect he has changed 60% of her departments objectives for this year. She's really faced with a dilemma about going through all that work again with her employees. For

Mary Manager the system puts obstacles in her way to achieving. Constant changes in her objectives make MBO impossible.

Are There Punishments?

Punishments may also be a result of managing in the best way possible. Bob in scenario II had very positive results in moving to a participative management style. His employees were more involved with their work and more motivated. Unfortunately Bob's peers have begun to ignore him. After asking around he found out that the other managers are saying he has gone "soft". This division has always been known for its "kick ass and take names" management style and Bob is going against that norm. What's worse is the best employees from other areas are trying to transfer to his area. The other managers are angry because they feel he is "stealing" their employees. In this case achievement turned out to be punishment in that Bob lost his friends.

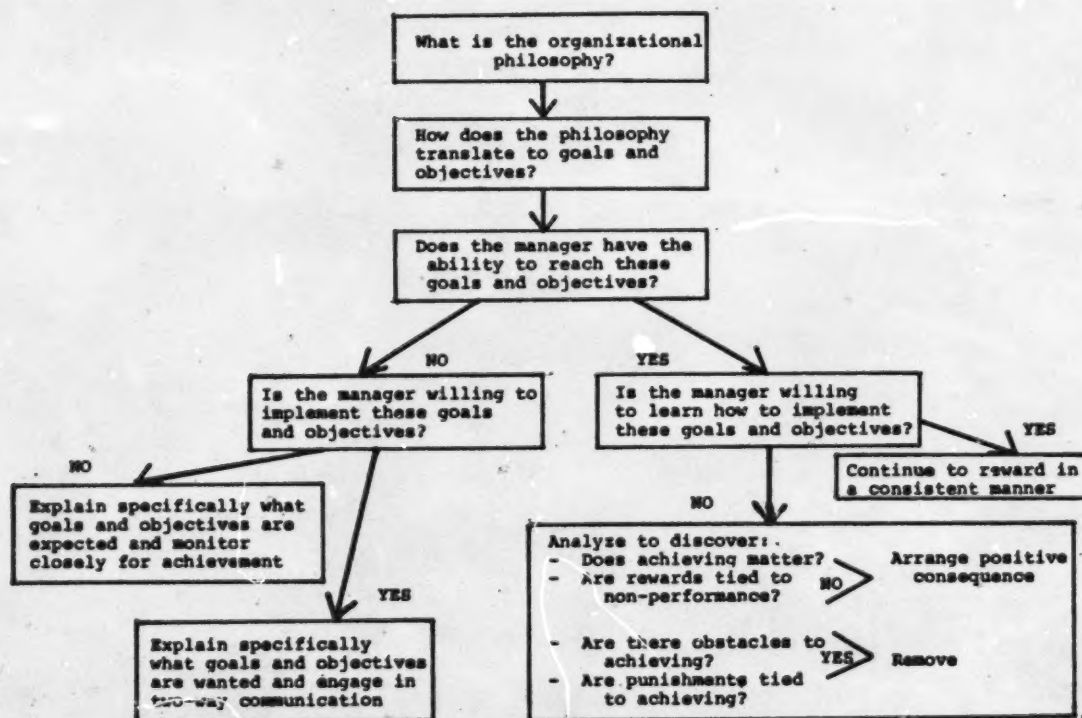
Both Mary Manager and Bob know how to do their jobs and do it well. The solution is obviously not training. Instead Mary's obstacles and Bob's punishments must be removed or one can only expect them to go back to their previous style of managing.

In the last four examples each of the managers had the ability to implement the behaviors and outcomes desired by the organization but wasn't willing to do so. Most often the response to this frustrating situation is to send the person to a management training session. But clearly the problem is not a lack of knowledge; the problem lies in the system. It is the job of

management development in conjunction with upper management to analyze the underlying causes and either arrange a positive consequence or remove the punishment or obstacle.

I'd Be Glad To

Finally, we have the best of all possible worlds, a manager who has goals and objectives which are consistent with the philosophy of the organization and who is both willing and able to implement the behaviors necessary to reach these goals.



The manager needs only to be rewarded in an appropriate and consistent fashion to maintain this behavior.

The ultimate management goal of an organization should be to develop all its managers to this stage. But as we have seen training is not the only way. So where do you begin? What are the steps?

Where To Begin

For managers to do their jobs better an organization must have a visible, consistent, concise company philosophy. The CEO and/or President are responsible for creating and driving this. At every opportunity, with every level of management the company philosophy must be reiterated and interpreted by the CEO/President. But philosophy is not enough.

Next, management development must ensure that the goals and objectives throughout the company are translated to be in concert with the philosophy. Such a job as overseeing the translation of philosophy requires subjective interpretation. Because of this subjectivity close work with the CEO/President is imperative so that what he or she envisions becomes a reality - not what management development would like or thinks most appropriate.

In the final step of this process management development works with those who supervise managers to determine specific needs in relation to meeting goals and objectives. If a manager is not meeting expectations management development assists in determining if that person would best benefit by monitoring, training, two-way communication, positive consequences, or the removal of obstacles, and then assists in this process.

Return if you will to the opening of this paper and review my call from Don Director. You can see that Don hasn't figured out what is the problem behavior of his manager or why the manager is choosing that behavior. Does the manager understand his goals

and objectives? Is he willing to implement them? Does he know how? Are the goals and objectives in concert with the organizational philosophy? Is the manager consistently frustrated as a result of doing what he thinks the company wants him to do? All of these are crucial questions must be answered before choosing the solution to Don's problem. Clearly a workshop may not be the answer.

Human behavior in organizations is incredibly complex. Assuming management behavior can be changed by training is myopic and sets everyone up for failure, including managers, their bosses, management development and the company. What is needed for a more effective management team is not more training but a comprehensive process for analyzing and realigning the organizational and management goals.

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